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Tenth report of the Secretary-General on Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the tenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). It provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the resolution since the previous report of the Secretary-General was issued on 3 March 2009 (S/2009/119).

2. During the reporting period, the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon generally continued to hold. I am pleased to report that all parties continue to express their support for and commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). However, a number of unresolved issues, described in detail in the present report, continue to render the state of the cessation of hostilities precarious and to hinder an agreement on a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel. Their resolution is also required in order to move towards a long-term solution between the two countries. The handover to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) of strike data relating to cluster bombs used by Israeli military forces in the 2006 war was a significant development in the reporting period.

3. On 7 June, parliamentary elections were held in Lebanon. International observation missions considered them to have been largely free and fair. Although isolated incidents were recorded during the campaign and on election day, the electoral process was by and large held in a relatively calm atmosphere. According to official results released by the Ministry of the Interior, 71 seats were won by candidates belonging to the 14 March alliance and 57 seats were won by candidates from the 8 March alliance. At the time of writing, the process of consultations for the formation of the next Government in Lebanon had just begun.

4. The period under review saw the completion of the process leading to the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. On 20 April, the Ambassador of Lebanon to the Syrian Arab Republic arrived in Damascus to take up his post. The Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to Lebanon presented his credentials to the President of Lebanon, Michel Sleiman, on 29 May. Both countries now operate embassies in each other's capitals.

5. In Israel, a new coalition Government, with Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister, was sworn in on 31 March.

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6. The commitment of both the recently established Government of Israel and the future Government of Lebanon, to be formed after the recent elections, will be critical for the continued implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and for further progress to be made in that respect. I took note of the reiteration by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, in his identical letters to the President of the Security Council and to me dated 11 June 2009, of the commitment of Lebanon to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and of his Government's assessment of the current status of the implementation of the resolution (see A/63/882-S/2009/30). In a letter to the Secretariat dated 15 June, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations also reiterated her Government's commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and provided further comments regarding the implementation of the resolution.

II. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

7. The parties maintained their declared commitment to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and continued to engage with the United Nations towards its implementation during the reporting period. The cessation of hostilities was generally upheld. Sporadic incidents and violations were promptly addressed and contained through the existing liaison and coordination arrangements UNIFIL maintains with the parties. The parties, in cooperation with UNIFIL, continued to visibly mark the line of withdrawal (the so-called Blue Line) to prevent inadvertent violations. Israeli air violations continued on an almost daily basis during the reporting period. The Lebanese Armed Forces maintained their operational tempo despite some redeployment of troops from southern Lebanon driven by operational demands elsewhere in the country. The Israel Defense Forces continue to control the part of the village of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Efforts to facilitate the full withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area continued.

8. A large-scale home-front exercise in Israel, which was conducted from 31 May to 4 June, caused some apprehension in Lebanon, especially given its timing — days before the Lebanese elections. UNIFIL was in close contact with the parties and communicated necessary clarifications obtained from the Israel Defense Forces about the defensive nature of the exercise and the fact that it was pre-planned and unrelated to current events in Lebanon. UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements with the parties helped to prevent misunderstandings, which could have led to an unwarranted rise in tension.

9. On 20 May, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, through identical letters addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me, conveyed information about a series of arrests of individuals in Lebanon charged with belonging to Israeli spying networks allegedly operating in Lebanon (A/63/860-S/2009/264). The letters also cited some cases of individuals suspected of belonging to those networks who had reportedly escaped into Israel, allegedly with support from the Israel Defense Forces. In a second letter, dated 2 June, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon provided a further update on the issue (A/63/870-S/2009/287).

10. According to the Government of Lebanon, from 7 June 2006 to date more than 35 arrests have been made in connection with alleged participation in Israeli spying

networks operating in Lebanon. According to official sources, at least 14 persons were charged with espionage. In addition, the Government of Lebanon maintains that three individuals, who had been charged with spying for Israel, crossed the technical fence from southern Lebanon into Israel, in two cases accompanied by family members, on three different dates and allegedly with the assistance of the Israeli army.

A. Situation in the UNIFIL area of operations

11. The situation in the UNIFIL area of operations remained generally quiet, and there were no serious breaches of the cessation of hostilities during the reporting period. Investigations by the Lebanese authorities are still under way into the rocket-launching incidents of 17 June 2007, 8 January 2008, 8 and 14 January 2009 and 21 February 2009. No suspects have been identified thus far, and there have been no claims of responsibility.

12. The Israel Defense Forces continued their occupation of the part of the village of Ghajar, and an adjacent area of land, that lies north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Notwithstanding the obligation of Israel to withdraw from the area, one year ago UNIFIL submitted a proposal to facilitate the full withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces. As I stated in my previous report (S/2008/715, para. 9), the Government of Lebanon expressed its readiness to accept the UNIFIL proposal in August 2008. In November 2008, the Government of Israel expressed its willingness to initiate discussions on the UNIFIL proposal. Since my last report, UNIFIL has had two meetings, on 5 March and 21 April, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel in which key issues related to the UNIFIL proposal were discussed. My Special Coordinator for Lebanon also consistently raised this issue with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during his visits to Israel during the reporting period. Israeli officials reaffirmed their commitment to resolving the issue as soon as possible, but said that they were not in a position to provide a definitive response to the UNIFIL proposal, as the new Government of Israel was undertaking a comprehensive policy review. The United Nations has not yet been informed of the Government's position on this issue.

13. In the identical letters addressed to me and to the President of the Security Council on 2 June 2009, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations stated that between 7 and 18 May 2009, a number of Lebanese citizens suspected of collaborating with Israel were believed to have crossed the Blue Line and the technical fence into Israel (two accompanied by family members), with the assistance of the Israel Defense Forces. The same information had been provided to UNIFIL by the Lebanese Armed Forces on 19 May. UNIFIL did not observe any illegal crossings of the Blue Line on those dates and is not in a position to independently confirm or deny the claims. On 20 May, UNIFIL requested the Israel Defense Forces to provide any information they may have on this issue, as a matter of urgency. The Israel Defense Forces replied on 9 June, acknowledging the UNIFIL request, and said that they would undertake to inform UNIFIL if relevant details became available.

14. On 3 March 2009, an Israeli soldier on patrol fired at least two rounds towards Lebanese territory in the general area of Addaisseh (Sector East), endangering civilians and Lebanese Armed Forces personnel at a nearby position. The rounds

struck a wall, on which was painted an anti-Israel mural, and a pavement. The Israel Defense Forces accepted responsibility for the incident and disciplined the soldier involved, but contended that it had been an accidental discharge and that there had been no hostile intent.

15. On 6 March, two individuals suspected of involvement in drug-smuggling activities across the Blue Line were arrested by the Lebanese Armed Forces in the vicinity of the village of Rmeich (Sector West), and Israeli authorities arrested a suspect on the Israeli side of the Blue Line.

16. Several incidents and minor violations of the Blue Line occurred during the reporting period, mainly in the vicinity of the village of Blida (Sector East) where the Blue Line cuts through farmland cultivated by local farmers. The farmers continued to cultivate the land, violating the Blue Line on a number of occasions. Discussions are continuing in the tripartite forum to find a solution to the issue. There were also a number of minor ground violations by shepherds who crossed the Blue Line accompanied by their livestock. Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL troops positioned close to the Blue Line continue to warn the local population about the location of the Line to prevent inadvertent violations. While these types of incidents have not escalated during the reporting period, their continuation underlines the importance of accelerating the visible marking of the Blue Line.

17. There continued to be steady progress in the pilot project to visibly mark the Blue Line, which is currently divided into three sectors totalling 20.5 km. To date, coordinates for 40 points have been agreed with the parties: 17 markers have already been installed, 8 markers are under construction and 15 coordinates are to be measured by the parties. It was also agreed by the parties that UNIFIL would unilaterally mark one additional point. The parties have reiterated their commitment to the process and their interest in speeding up marking on the ground. To this end, UNIFIL has increased the number of its combat engineering companies working on the project to augment access clearance, including through minefields.

18. During the reporting period, the Lebanese Armed Forces commenced work on a two-stage plan to build a road parallel to the Blue Line, with the first stage of the project expected to take approximately two years to complete. UNIFIL engineering assets are providing initial support to the construction. The main purpose of the road is to allow the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL to better patrol and control the area in the vicinity of the Blue Line and to react more rapidly in response to incidents along the Line.

19. Israeli aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles continued to intrude into Lebanese airspace almost daily in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolution 1701 (2006). UNIFIL protested all overflights to the Israel Defense Forces. The Government of Lebanon also protested the overflights, while the Government of Israel maintained that they were necessary security measures, citing alleged lack of enforcement of the arms embargo.

20. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained their respective installations and conducted daily activities at a high operational tempo. Both forces continued efforts to enhance the efficiency of their coordinated activities. The two forces continued operating six co-located checkpoints on the Litani River. The checkpoints effectively demonstrated the coordinated presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL at the important northern entry points to the UNIFIL

area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces increased the vehicle checking and search rate during times of increased tension or alerts. On a daily basis, the two forces also operated two permanent checkpoints and five checkpoints in randomly selected locations in the area of operations, in addition to three coordinated foot patrols along the Blue Line. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces conducted an average of 15 counter-rocket-launching operations each 24-hour period, day and night, during which troops patrol a selected area by vehicle and on foot and establish temporary observation posts and checkpoints to stop and check vehicles and persons moving in the area. In an effort to prevent the launching of rockets or smuggling activities across the Blue Line, UNIFIL conducted special patrols and observation activities focusing on sensitive areas, including long-range patrols by the quick reaction force and the establishment of night observation posts in response to threat assessments.

21. A number of joint training exercises between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces were carried out in the reporting period, including an artillery exercise; a combined earthquake contingency exercise in southern Lebanon is in the planning stages. Following the decision of the Lebanese Armed Forces Command to establish a civil-military cooperation and military community outreach unit in its structure, UNIFIL provided civil-military training for designated Lebanese Armed Forces staff. Regular joint training and exercises by the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force and the Lebanese navy continued. During operational training periods at sea, the functioning of the Coastal Radar Organization, as well as the ability of the Lebanese naval chain of command to react to unexpected events, proved to be effective. For the first time, personnel of the Lebanese Customs Department took part in the training activities. While UNIFIL continues its training activities to build capacity within the Lebanese Armed Forces on land and at sea, material and technical support remains essential if the Lebanese Armed Forces are to gradually assume responsibility over the UNIFIL area of operations and the maritime entry points into Lebanon.

22. UNIFIL continued to exercise full freedom of movement, in general, throughout its area of operations, carrying out more than 10,000 patrols each month. On a few occasions, UNIFIL patrols were temporarily stopped by local civilians. In each case, the incidents were brief and were resolved on the ground with the assistance of the Lebanese Armed Forces, who helped to clarify any misunderstandings with the local authorities. On 28 April, a UNIFIL patrol, while securing the area and taking pictures and grid references of unexploded ordnance next to a house in the vicinity of a village north of Markaba (Sector East), was surrounded by a group of civilians and temporarily blocked by civilian vehicles. In another incident, on 8 March, local civilians in the general area of Bint Jubayl (Sector West) impeded the freedom of movement of a UNIFIL patrol that was pursuing two civilians carrying hunting rifles. As a result, the civilians carrying hunting rifles could not be apprehended. In addition, UNIFIL activities were monitored on occasion by civilians in various areas.

23. There was a relative increase in instances of civilians, mostly children and young people, throwing stones at UNIFIL patrols in some areas close to the Blue Line, as well as during the funeral procession of a Lebanese Armed Forces soldier killed in a traffic accident with a UNIFIL vehicle.

24. With the exception of the above-mentioned incidents, the attitude of the local population towards UNIFIL continued to be generally positive. The mission's outreach components played an important role in engaging the local population and ensuring its understanding of the UNIFIL mandate and daily operational activities. Those activities have been supported by a number of new social media channels. The provision of humanitarian, infrastructural and capacity-building support, particularly through the activities of troop-contributing countries and the implementation of quick-impact projects funded through the UNIFIL budget, continued to help build the local population's confidence in the mission and its mandate. In this regard, civil affairs and civil-military cooperation components undertook a series of environmental initiatives during the reporting period, working in cooperation with international and local governmental and non-governmental organizations.

25. UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in establishing an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006). The Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL continued to undertake intensive and coordinated measures, as described above, specifically aimed at preventing the possible smuggling of weapons across the Litani River, discovering and removing all weapons and related materiel that may still be present in the area and ensuring that there are no armed elements in the area.

26. During the reporting period, those efforts resulted in the discovery of 17 additional abandoned bunkers and other military infrastructure dating back to the 2006 war or before, one of which was surrounded by cluster munitions and other booby traps. There was no evidence of recent use in any of those positions. UNIFIL routinely checked former armed element facilities in the area of operations, including bunkers and caves, but did not find any indication that they had been reactivated or any evidence of new military infrastructure in its area of operations. Some ammunition was also found and was handed over to the Lebanese Armed Forces. In addition, on 4 April, UNIFIL discovered a detonator connected to a slow-burning cord in the hippodrome in Tyre. On 16 April, in the vicinity of Tyre, a Lebanese civilian reported to the Lebanese Armed Forces that there was a suspicious object in his motorbike, which, upon investigation, was found to be booby-trapped with one 60 mm mortar grenade linked to two detonators with approximately 250 g of explosives and some matches. In both instances, the devices were not primed to detonate. On 28 May, UNIFIL, acting on information from a Lebanese civilian, discovered a bag containing approximately 10 kg of explosives, one rocket fuse and some wire, which, although not assembled as a device, had been placed alongside a road east of Marrakah (Sector West). The Lebanese Armed Forces initiated investigations into all cases.

27. UNIFIL did not encounter any unauthorized armed personnel in the area of operations during the reporting period, with the exception of civilians armed with hunting rifles despite the Government ban on hunting and the carrying of weapons inside the area. The Lebanese Armed Forces acted to arrest alleged hunters, although some managed to flee, and reminded the local population of the general ban on hunting, as well as the ban on the carrying of weapons inside the area, issuing official statements to the media to that effect.

28. The Government of Israel maintains that Hizbullah is continuing to build its military presence and capacity, largely north of the Litani River, but also inside the UNIFIL area of operations using, in particular, private houses in urban areas. As stated in previous reports, UNIFIL, in collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, immediately investigates any claims regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons within its area of operations if specific information is received. In seeking to ensure that there are no unauthorized armed personnel, assets or weapons inside its area of operations, UNIFIL remains determined to act with all necessary means within its mandate and to the full extent within its rules of engagement. However, according to its mandate, UNIFIL cannot search private houses and properties unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of new military infrastructure or the smuggling of arms into the area of operations.

29. UNIFIL, in collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, is constantly improving monitoring and control of the entry points across the Litani River. UNIFIL also patrols throughout its area of operations, including in urban areas, and conducts surveillance and monitoring activities, particularly at entry points and suspicious areas. In addition, the Lebanese Armed Forces Command has confirmed that it will investigate any claims and will act immediately on receiving evidence of unauthorized armed personnel or weapons in the area and put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions, specifically concerning the illegal presence of armed personnel and weapons.

30. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued its dual mandate of carrying out maritime interdiction operations along the Lebanese coast, including near the country's sea borders, to prevent the entry of unauthorized arms and related materiel, as well as training of the Lebanese navy. Since the start of its mission in October 2006, the Maritime Task Force has hailed and queried almost 25,000 ships in its area of operations. Since my last report, an additional 72 inspections had been carried out on vessels that were identified as suspicious, increasing the total number to 312 since the inception of the Maritime Task Force. Of the 72 inspections since the last report, the Maritime Task Force requested 42. The Lebanese navy and Lebanese customs inspected the vessels to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board and cleared all of them. During the inspection of a vessel on 8 May, the Lebanese authorities discovered one Lebanese citizen who had embarked the vessel illegally in a foreign port. The person was arrested and handed over to the Sûreté Générale for further investigation. Since my last report, the Lebanese navy has regularly assumed responsibility inside the territorial waters for hailing vessels approaching the main Lebanese ports, while the Maritime Task Force has assumed a monitoring role.

31. During the reporting period, incidents occurred along the line of buoys almost daily. Israel Defense Forces south of the line of buoys dropped explosive charges in the area with increasing frequency, and on numerous occasions fired warning shots and flares along the buoy line. The Israel Defense Forces stated that these were security measures against Lebanese fishing vessels approaching or crossing the line of buoys. While UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize, the

issue has been raised in the tripartite forum, and the Force Commander has expressed his concern that the incidents contribute to increasing tension between the parties. The Israel Defense Forces proposed that the tripartite mechanism also discuss maritime issues, specifically activities and security measures on either side of the lines of buoys. The Government of Lebanon requested UNIFIL to install a line of buoys in conformity with international standards.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

32. The monthly tripartite meetings, chaired by the Force Commander, with senior representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, remain the central mechanism for liaison and coordination and a means to identify measures to address security and military operational issues with the parties. Violations of resolution 1701 (2006) were discussed, and the parties endorsed the findings of UNIFIL investigations into the rocket attacks carried out in January and February 2009 and the recommendations to undertake specific measures to prevent a reoccurrence of such attacks. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations attended the tripartite meeting held on 6 May 2009 and highlighted the importance of the forum for reducing the risk of incidents escalating into hostilities or misunderstandings leading to confrontation. During the meeting, the parties reiterated their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) and underscored the significance of the tripartite meetings in enhancing stability and avoiding unilateral actions that could raise tension.

33. Regular exchanges between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces senior command continued during the reporting period and ensured a closely coordinated strategic approach to the activities of the two forces. Daily liaison at various levels remained close, facilitating efficient coordination at the operational and tactical levels. The Lebanese Armed Forces maintained liaison officers at UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura and at Sector headquarters, while UNIFIL continued to have a liaison officer stationed with Lebanese Armed Forces headquarters, south Lebanon, in Tyre.

34. In April, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they would make necessary adjustments to the deployment of their troops throughout the country, including in the UNIFIL area of operations, prior to the forthcoming parliamentary elections, with the aim of maximizing deployment and enhancing mobility. As a first step, in late April the Lebanese Armed Forces reduced their presence in the area south of the Litani River to three brigades, one heavy and two light, and one mechanized battalion. In mid-May, one of the two light brigades was reinforced with one artillery and one tank battalion, thus increasing its strength from 1,100 to 1,700 personnel. The Lebanese Armed Forces are also planning to reinforce the second light brigade in the same way later this year, which would bring the Lebanese Armed Forces deployment in the UNIFIL area of operations back to approximately 5,500 troops, organized in three heavy brigades. Concurrently, the Lebanese Armed Forces are reinforcing their presence in areas north of the Litani River, thereby strengthening their control over access points to the UNIFIL area of operations. The redeployments and reinforcement of the three remaining Lebanese Armed Forces brigades in the UNIFIL area of operations are expected to provide the Lebanese Armed Forces with greater possibilities and flexibility to carry out operations in conjunction with UNIFIL.

35. Coordination and liaison with the Israel Defense Forces remained efficient. The UNIFIL Force Commander maintained effective relations with his Israel Defense Forces counterparts, as well as with other senior Israeli authorities. UNIFIL continued to have a liaison team with two officers at the Israel Defense Forces Northern Command headquarters in Zefat. There has been no progress on the establishment of the UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv during the reporting period, and the Israel Defense Forces have maintained their position that there is no need for the office.

C. Disarming armed groups

36. As I have reported previously, Hizbullah continues to maintain a substantial military capacity distinct from that of the Lebanese State, in contravention of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). This military capacity continues to pose a serious challenge to the ability of the Lebanese State to exercise full sovereignty over its territory.

37. In interviews and statements during the reporting period, Hizbullah leaders have vowed that they will remain armed as long as Lebanon remains occupied and the State and the army are not capable of protecting the country, and that they now have an arsenal such as they have not had since 1982.

38. I also note that the Deputy Secretary-General of Hizbullah stated in an interview that Hizbullah had provided every type of support to Palestinian groups in Gaza, including military assistance over a long period.

39. The presence of Palestinian military bases operated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada outside the officially established Palestinian refugee camps also continues to encroach on the sovereignty of Lebanon. The fact that some of those military bases straddle the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic adds an additional challenge to the control of the border between both countries. I have called upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle those bases and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with those efforts. The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, in his identical letters dated 30 April 2009 addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me, conveyed the position of his country on those matters, noting that the Syrian Arab Republic would not interfere in such matters unless requested by the competent Lebanese authorities. I understand that this issue was raised by the Lebanese authorities in May with the then-Chief of Staff of the Syrian army.

40. On 23 March, a roadside bomb outside the Saida Mieh Mieh camp killed the Deputy Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon, Kamal Medhat, and three others. I condemned that terrorist attack. No party claimed responsibility, and an investigation is being carried out by Lebanese and Palestinian camp authorities. On 16 June, a low-ranking Fatah member was assassinated in the Saida Ein el-Hilweh camp. Notwithstanding those attacks, closer cooperation between Palestinian camp authorities and Lebanese authorities improved camp security over the reporting period, as illustrated by the fact that the situation remained calm during the elections. Despite those measures, tension within Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon continues to have the potential to increase.

41. I continue to believe that the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon should take place through a Lebanese-led political process. In this connection, the National Dialogue on a defence strategy, which brings together the country's political leaders under the chairmanship of President Sleiman, held three further sessions during the reporting period, on 2 March, 28 April and 1 June, bringing the total to seven sessions since it was reconvened in accordance with the Doha agreement of May 2008.

42. In recent months, participants in the National Dialogue committed themselves to implementing the decisions adopted at the sessions of the National Dialogue held in 2006, including the dismantling of Palestinian bases outside the camps, and made a number of pronouncements in support of a peaceful process leading to the elections of 7 June. Finally, the National Dialogue has agreed on the establishment of mechanisms that would assist a future discussion of national defence strategy, on the basis of the proposals already received from members of the National Dialogue and of those that are expected to be submitted in the future.

D. Arms embargo

43. One of the key provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) is that the Government of Lebanon secure its borders and other entry points so as to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel. In the resolution, the Security Council further decided that all States were to prevent the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft.

44. During the reporting period, the Common Border Force, staffed with elements from four Lebanese agencies (Armed Forces, Internal Security Forces, Customs and General Security), continued to operate along the 90 km of the northern border. Lebanese authorities reported an increase in the number of arrests and seizures of smuggled commercial goods made by the Common Border Force in the last quarter. On 26 May, the border crossing point between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic at Bokaya was officially opened.

45. Following a decision of the Lebanese Cabinet on 20 December 2008, a draft operational plan for the deployment of a second Common Border Force along the northernmost 70 km of the eastern border with the Syrian Arab Republic, starting, as a first stage, with the northern part of that border, was developed during the reporting period. The Commander of the new Force, a Lebanese Armed Forces General, has already been appointed. Once the plan has been implemented, common border forces will be deployed along more than 50 per cent of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

46. The preparatory phase for this extension has commenced and is expected to last until 15 July 2009, with the full deployment of the Force in the new area of responsibility scheduled for completion by 1 April 2010. In line with one of the key recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team II, my Special Coordinator facilitated donor coordination for the planning for the extension to the east. On 3 and 4 June, the Lebanese Armed Forces convened a workshop bringing together officials from the country's security agencies, key ministries and interested donors, with the assistance of my Special Coordinator, to review the draft workplan for the deployment of the Common Border Force to the east.

47. The Syrian authorities have informed my Special Coordinator that the deployment of Syrian troops along the border with Lebanon continues, noting that the deployment is being carried out in coordination with the Lebanese authorities. The Government of Lebanon has also informed me that cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Arab Republic on matters of management of the common border continues to take place regularly and satisfactorily.

48. The effective management of the borders of Lebanon, however, continues to be affected by the lack of demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and by the continued presence of Palestinian military bases that straddle the border between both countries.

49. Since my last report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), the Government of Lebanon and its agencies have not reported to the United Nations any incidents of arms smuggling into Lebanon. For its part, the Government of Israel continues to allege significant breaches of the arms embargo across the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. During my Special Coordinator's visit to Israel, the Government of Israel conveyed to him allegations that Hizbullah is continuing to rebuild its forces and that it possesses a significant number of missiles capable of striking Israel. Although the United Nations takes these allegations seriously, it is not in a position to verify the information independently.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

50. The Lebanese Armed Forces assumed primary responsibility for the coordination of humanitarian clearance operations as from 1 January 2009 through the Lebanese Mine Action Centre. Coordination of clearance operations in south Lebanon is now managed by the Mine Action Centre from its Regional Mine Action Centre in Nabatieh. The United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre now works exclusively in support of UNIFIL clearance and explosive ordnance disposal assets and as a liaison between the Lebanese Mine Action Centre and UNIFIL. In April 2009, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre relocated from its base in Tyre to Naqoura to better support UNIFIL.

51. On 12 May, UNIFIL received from Israel technical strike data on the number, type and location of cluster munitions fired at Lebanon in the 2006 conflict and related maps with details regarding the three primary delivery mechanisms — aircraft, multiple rocket launching systems and 155 mm artillery — as well as alleged Hizbullah firing positions inside southern Lebanon. UNIFIL immediately informed the Lebanese authorities about the receipt of the data and handed it over to the Lebanese Armed Forces. At the time of writing, the strike data provided is being analysed and compared with the strike locations identified on the ground and submunitions and unexploded ordnance cleared since August 2006. The United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre and the Lebanese Mine Action Centre have concluded the map assessment of the strike data, which is deemed to be useful, and ground assessments are being conducted in order to identify potential new strike locations.

52. During the reporting period, 12 additional cluster bomb strike locations were identified on the ground and recorded by the Regional Mine Action Centre in Nabatieh, bringing the total number of locations recorded thus far to 1,073. Since my last report, there have been seven incidents involving unexploded ordnance —

including cluster munitions — from the 2006 conflict, resulting in one death and six injuries. Those incidents bring the total number of fatalities and injuries among civilians since the end of the conflict to 28 and 244, respectively. In addition, there were two incidents involving landmines laid prior to 2000, resulting in the injury of three civilians during the reporting period. No accidents occurred during clearance operations in the period. Since August 2006, there have been 57 casualties due to clearance activities: 14 fatalities and 43 injuries.

F. Delineation of borders

53. In pursuance of the implementation of paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006) and of paragraph 4 of resolution 1680 (2006), in which the Security Council called for the delineation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, I have continued to call on both Governments to reach an agreement on their common border.

54. Following the agreement reached by the Presidents of Lebanon and of the Syrian Arab Republic at their summit meeting in August 2008 to reactivate the Lebanese-Syrian border committee tasked with delineating the border between their countries, the Government of Lebanon has informed my Special Coordinator that its delegation to the joint border committee is headed by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Government of Lebanon indicated that it has notified the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic accordingly, but that to date it has received no response. The Government of Lebanon has informed my Special Coordinator that, in the meantime, its delegation has been conducting periodic preparatory meetings.

55. On 29 March 2009, the President of the Syrian Arab Republic informed me that his Government would commence its delineation work on the border with Lebanon once it had concluded its work on the border of the Syrian Arab Republic with Jordan. On 27 May 2009, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic informed my Special Coordinator that technical work on the Jordanian border had been completed and that contacts with the Government of Lebanon had been established with the aim of convening a meeting of the Lebanese-Syrian border delineation committee.

56. Since my previous report, there has been no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. In my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) issued on 30 October 2007 (S/2007/641), I provided a provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area based on the best available information. The Government of Lebanon has already accepted the provisional definition as a reasonable and practical basis for removing one of the obstacles standing in the way of the establishment of a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel. Despite my repeated requests, I have not received any official responses to the provisional definition from either Israel or the Syrian Arab Republic.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

57. The safety and security of UNIFIL personnel remains a priority. The mission continued to receive sporadic threat warnings. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities and Lebanese Armed Forces maintained their cooperation and joint efforts to ensure that potential security threats to UNIFIL are addressed appropriately. Notwithstanding the obligation of all parties to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL and the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon for law and order, UNIFIL continued regularly to review its procedures and focused on mitigating risk to its personnel, assets and installations, while ensuring mandate implementation. In this regard, in addition to electronic countermeasures to jam explosive devices, UNIFIL can rely on micro-unmanned aerial vehicles — a critical risk-mitigation asset to be utilized at the discretion of the Force Commander to enhance Force protection and civilian staff security.

58. Investigations by Lebanese and Spanish authorities continued into the 24 June 2007 attack against UNIFIL, which killed six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent. As the identity of the perpetrators is still unknown and there are no suspects in custody, the case remains with the preliminary investigative judge of the military court. Over the reporting period, the judge interviewed a number of witnesses to the attack.

59. Two additional trial hearings were held in April in the court case against a group of defendants, eight of whom are in custody (six remain at large), being tried on a series of terrorist charges, including the 16 July 2007 attack against UNIFIL at Qasmieh Bridge. With regard to the 8 January 2008 attack against UNIFIL near Saida, two court hearings were held in March and June 2009 against a group of defendants, one of whom is in custody and four of whom are being tried in absentia. UNIFIL attends all the court hearings as an observer.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

60. As at 15 June 2009, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 12,051 personnel, of whom 441 were women, with a civilian strength of 328 international and 664 national staff members, of whom 88 and 172, respectively, were women. UNIFIL is supported by 53 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, including one woman. Further to the notification of the United Nations by the Government of Poland of its intention to withdraw its troops from UNIFIL, two platoons were withdrawn from Sector East in April, and the withdrawal of the whole contingent will be completed by October 2009. Efforts are ongoing to identify replacements for the logistics and maintenance, as well as infantry, companies currently provided by Poland. As part of the strengthening of UNIFIL with four additional infantry companies, an additional Malaysian company is expected to deploy to UNIFIL by the end of June. In addition, the Governments of Indonesia and of Nepal have informed the United Nations that they are ready to strengthen their current contributions to UNIFIL by providing one infantry company each. Work on the expansion of the UNIFIL

Naqoura headquarters site progressed according to schedule. Securing improved air surveillance assets for the mission remains a priority.

61. Since March, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force has been operating at a reduced strength of eight vessels. The lower number of units in the Maritime Task Force led to a reduction in training opportunities with the Lebanese navy, as maritime interdiction operations represent the primary task for the Task Force. With the handover of the Maritime Task Force leadership at the end of May from Belgium to Italy, the composition of the eight vessels in the Task Force also changed. Instead of two frigates, two corvettes, three patrol boats and one support vessel, the Maritime Task Force currently has only one frigate, one corvette, five patrol boats and the supply vessel. The number of helicopters in the Maritime Task Force was also reduced from three to two. The reduction from two frigates to one and the overall shift to smaller vessels in the Maritime Task Force further reduced the capabilities of the Task Force to a level considered less than adequate to ensure the full implementation of its dual mandate of maritime interdiction operations and Lebanese navy training activities, and reduced its operational flexibility. Efforts are currently under way to strengthen the Maritime Task Force.

V. Observations

62. While the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon continues to hold, and while progress was made regarding the implementation of some aspects of resolution 1701 (2006) during the reporting period, progress in other areas has been slower than expected and, in some cases, non-existent.

63. The situation in the UNIFIL area of operations has been generally quiet during the reporting period. I am pleased that the parties maintained their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006). I urge the parties to continue to act with maximum restraint and utilize the liaison and coordination arrangements with UNIFIL and to respect the cessation of hostilities and the Blue Line. I note that any unauthorized crossing of the Blue Line is a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). I encourage the Lebanese Armed Forces to continue to increase their capacity to ensure that there are no unauthorized armed personnel and weapons between the Litani River and the Blue Line and to prevent the launching of rocket attacks and other hostile activities. I also call upon Israel to cease immediately all overflights of Lebanese territory, which are in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolution 1701 (2006).

64. I note with concern that the Israel Defense Forces continued their occupation of the part of the village of Ghajar, and an adjacent area of land, that lies north of the Blue Line. In accordance with its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), Israel must complete its withdrawal from the area. I call on Israel to do so without delay. UNIFIL remains ready to facilitate the full withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area.

65. As I noted in my last report, UNIFIL plays an important role, and its cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces has helped to establish a new strategic environment and to restore and maintain stability in southern Lebanon. This was achieved as a result of the significant deployment of troops and maritime assets, involving substantial financial resources and based on the strong commitment of many troop-contributing countries. However, I stress again that this cannot be sustained indefinitely. It is the responsibility of the parties to take advantage of the

window of opportunity provided by the UNIFIL deployment to refocus on all outstanding issues in order to achieve a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006).

66. Ensuring that the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line is free of unauthorized weapons is a long-term endeavour. UNIFIL has not found evidence of the smuggling of arms into its area of operations. Bearing in mind that it is impossible to prove a negative, the unauthorized presence and smuggling of weapons into the area cannot ever be entirely excluded. The rocket attacks launched from this area in the past, as well as previous attacks against UNIFIL, demonstrate that there may still be weapons and hostile armed elements ready to use them in the area of operations. The Lebanese authorities have the primary responsibility to ensure that there are no unauthorized armed personnel, assets or weapons in the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line. UNIFIL supports the Lebanese Armed Forces in that endeavour.

67. The Lebanese Armed Forces, in partnership with UNIFIL, play a key role in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Lebanese Armed Forces continued to act with strong commitment and resolve, and their capacity has been gradually strengthened with the assistance of international donors. I am grateful to those countries that are helping to equip and train the Lebanese Armed Forces, including its navy, and I urge continuing strong support from the international community, which is critical in order for the Armed Forces to be able to assume effective security responsibility over the area of UNIFIL operations and the maritime entry points into Lebanon in the future.

68. I am pleased to note that the parties continue to make progress, in cooperation with UNIFIL, to visibly mark the Blue Line. I encourage Lebanon and Israel to maintain their constructive engagement and accelerate the visible marking of the Blue Line in order to reduce inadvertent violations and build confidence.

69. I am grateful to all the troop-contributing countries for their continued commitment to UNIFIL and to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The need for this continued commitment and support, including the contribution of troops and assets necessary to enable UNIFIL to efficiently and effectively perform all of its mandated activities on land and at sea, cannot be overstated. I wish to strongly commend the UNIFIL Force Commander and the military and civilian peacekeeping personnel who continue to play a critical role in helping to promote peace and stability in southern Lebanon, as well as the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the staff of his Office. At the same time, I remain concerned for the safety and security of United Nations personnel and urge all parties to abide by their obligation to ensure their safety and security.

70. The handing over by Israel to UNIFIL on 12 May of technical strike data for the cluster bombs, which the United Nations had requested repeatedly since the cessation of hostilities in August 2006, is a positive development. I am encouraged that the data seem useful.

71. I am concerned at the allegations by the Government of Lebanon that Israeli spy cells have been operating in Lebanon and that the Israel Defense Forces helped alleged spies to cross from Lebanon into Israel through the Blue Line, which, if proved, could endanger the fragile cessation of hostilities that exists between Israel and Lebanon. I take note of the serious concerns that the Lebanese authorities have

expressed in this regard and of their assertion that such actions constitute a violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and of resolution 1701 (2006).

72. I remain concerned about the presence of armed groups in Lebanon operating outside the control of the State, which poses a challenge to the ability of the State to exercise full control over its territory. The United Nations continues to believe that the disarmament of all armed groups should take place through a Lebanese-led political process, so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those authorized by the State.

73. In this regard, I commend Lebanese leaders for the progress made thus far in the National Dialogue, led by President Sleiman, which has held seven sessions since the Doha agreement of May 2008. I trust that Lebanese leaders will live up to the high expectations placed on them by reconvening the National Dialogue soon after the elections, by implementing decisions already adopted and by further advancing discussions on the crucial issue of the national defence strategy.

74. I am concerned by the continued presence of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada military bases in Lebanon and the threat they pose to the country's stability. I call upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle those bases, as agreed by the National Dialogue.

75. Efforts to delineate and demarcate the common border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic should not be delayed. I believe that such efforts will enhance the relationship between the two countries. I urge the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and of Lebanon to undertake concrete and practical steps towards achieving that goal. In particular, I encourage the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to follow up on its contacts with its Lebanese counterpart with a view to convening the joint border committee. The United Nations stands ready to provide assistance to the parties, as required.

76. I will also continue my diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the issue of the Shab'a Farms area, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I encourage Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I had provided based on the best available information.

77. I call upon all Member States to fulfil their obligations by respecting immediately and unconditionally the arms embargo imposed on Lebanon, which remains a fundamental aspect of resolution 1701 (2006) and an important element for domestic and regional stability. Control of the Lebanese-Syrian border is another such aspect. I call on the Government of Lebanon to pursue its efforts to secure that border. These aspects must be observed in full and without exception, as they are of crucial importance to ensure there is no flow of weapons to groups outside the control of the State. Regional parties, particularly those with ties with Hizbullah and other groups in Lebanon, are obliged to abide fully by the arms embargo. Any breach of it is a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and threatens the stability of the country and of the region as a whole.

78. In this connection, I welcome the concrete efforts exerted by the Government of Lebanon to control its northern border through the Common Border Force and to deploy a second Common Border Force to the eastern border. This is an important step in line with its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), but one that will require significant resources. I am encouraged by the process of consultation taking

place between Lebanese authorities and donors, with assistance from my Special Coordinator, regarding the planning for this deployment. I thank donors for their contributions to the Common Border Force in the northern border and encourage them to consider further generous donations to enable this new deployment to the eastern border. I call upon the new Lebanese Government to develop a comprehensive strategy for border management in line with the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team II.

79. Continuous progress needs to be made regarding measures aimed at improving the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. It will be imperative for the future Government of Lebanon to build on the commendable initial steps taken by the previous Government, with a view to enabling Palestinian refugees to live in dignity and to ensuring peaceful coexistence between Lebanese and Palestinians, without prejudice to the settlement of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive peace agreement.

80. As the crucial phase of the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp begins, I thank donor States that have responded generously to the appeals issued by the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for the reconstruction of the camp, as well as the adjacent affected Lebanese communities. I also reiterate my call for additional contributions, which are required for the successful implementation of that crucial project.

81. I congratulate the people and the Government of Lebanon on the successful conduct of the parliamentary elections held on 7 June, which took place in a relatively calm environment largely free from political violence and intimidation. The cooperation of all sides will be required for the formation of a Government that continues to preserve stability in the country. I trust that the process of Government formation will proceed as smoothly and expeditiously as possible. I call upon the Government to be formed in Lebanon to reiterate its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and to take necessary visible steps towards its implementation.

82. I also call upon the Government in Israel to maintain its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and to take necessary visible steps towards its implementation.

83. I welcome the completion of the process leading to the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and I commend their respective leaderships for this achievement. I am looking forward to further renewed cooperation between both countries.

84. Almost three years after resolution 1701 (2006) was adopted, it remains the best available blueprint for the parties to move from the current state of cessation of hostilities towards a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution. These goals will be achieved only through the adoption of concrete measures on the various issues that I have listed in detail in the present report.

85. It continues to be my profound conviction that we must exert all possible efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, on the basis of the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which remains interdependent with the full territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.